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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY



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From the Editor-in-Chief

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This issue offers something of a “back of house” tour into the making of historical studies. How are the sources for historical studies identified, gathered and preserved? How do the lives of historians themselves influence their perspectives on the subjects they study? I would like to say that this theme emerged as a result of careful planning, but, in the way that often proves to be the case, it emerged of its own volition. Mike Bechthold and I were seldom both in Waterloo at the same time this past busy summer and, typical guys that we are, neither of us does much to keep in touch. Phone calls are rare and consist of a few mumbled sentences; e-mails are little more frequent or scintillating.

Eric Brown and Tim Cook’s article, “The Hendershot Brothers in the Great War,” in the most recent issue drew on remarkable collections of letters and photographs that were donated to the Canadian War Museum as a result of Jack Granatstein’s efforts to build up the museum’s archival holdings when he was director in 1998-2000. It was a story that could not be told because donors are protected by confidentiality. The donors, Professor Michael Bliss and his wife Elizabeth, have willingly put aside that confidentiality. In a letter reproduced in this issue, Professor Bliss recounts the history of the collections, and provides further information about Warren Hendershot’s later life. In a happy coincidence, Ken Reynold’s column for this issue provides information

about how to access the library and archival holdings of both the Canadian War Museum and the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Christine Leppard, who did her MA at Wilfrid Laurier and is now a PhD candidate at the University of Calgary, is investigating how the Canadian Army’s official historians researched and wrote the story of the Italian campaign of 1943 to 1945. The article in the present number examines the organization and experiences of No.1 Canadian Field Historical Unit, organized late in 1943 to record the operations of I Canadian Corps.

Sean Maloney, as historical adviser to the chief of the land staff, has visited Afghanistan annually to help record the current operations of the Canadian Forces. The present issue includes the third account we have received from Sean, in this case on the Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams that have been supporting the Afghan National Army in the western reaches of the Panjwayi district. Sean’s pieces bear more than a passing resemblance to the eyewitness accounts by the historical officers assigned to Italy discussed in Christine’s article.

Donald M. Schurman, one of the founders of academic military history in Canada, saw combat as an aircrew member of No. 6 (RCAF) Group, Bomber Command during the Second World War. Don’s focus in his PhD at Cambridge University (1955) and subsequent teaching career was the history of the Royal Navy. Only some decades later, in 1985, did he set down his reflections on his wartime experience, and on the controversy over the bombing of Germany. The publication in which it

originally appeared, however, is not widely available, and I was delighted when Don agreed that it should be reprinted here; he has also provided a fresh introduction with his more recent thoughts.

Frank Millerd provides a rather different type of personal reflection on service in the RCAF squadrons of Bomber Command, and something of an historical detective story. Frank recounts how he sought out the record of his uncle William F. Millerd’s wartime service, and the circumstances of his death in operations in May 1942. The article has a particular resonance for me, as readers may recall that in 2006 I published a similar piece on my own Uncle Bill’s close brush with death in the same aircraft type, the Handley-Page Hampden, in the same squadron, No.408, only a few months after Bill Millerd’s Hampden was shot down.

Although my own Uncle Bill survived the war, he was a late casualty, dying when he was only in his early 50s of heart disease that had at the very least been severely aggravated by combat stress. In the present issue we have two quite different reflections on the study of combat stress. Laura Brandon of the Canadian War Museum relates her investigations into the depiction of combat stress victims in art, in paintings from the two world wars and in more recent works. Terry Copp has allowed us to print the text of a talk in which he recounts his own experiences and challenges in studying combat stress.

Roger Sarty
August 2009

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